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In Confidence: Not to be quoted without reference to the Laboratory

CRUISE REPORT

FRS EXPLORER

5 - 27 January 1972

OBJECTIVES

1. To tag demersal fish in offshore North Sea waters.
2. To bring live fish back to the aquarium.

NARRATIVE

"Explorer" sailed from Aberdeen on 7 January having had to delay in order to get a full complement of crew. On the following day, an attempt was made to work at a position east of Fair Isle. However, SE gales became imminent and the ship proceeded to a relatively sheltered position NW of Shetland. For the remainder of the first part of the cruise, force 8-10 gales persisted. Some work was possible in the lee of the islands however, and 23 hauls were completed. The ship then proceeded to Aberdeen and, after a difficult passage, arrived there on January 20. Departure was again delayed, partly to repair some storm damage and partly to await a replacement officer. The ship sailed again on 22 January and proceeded in good weather towards Bressay Shoal. The following day, SW gales sprang up, and the ship proceeded to a relatively sheltered position east of Orkney. There, 8 hauls were completed on 24 and 25 January. Weather conditions deteriorated during this period and on the morning of 26 January, work had to be abandoned and the ship proceeded to Aberdeen arriving there on the late tide on the 26th.

RESULTS

Because of the exceptionally bad weather conditions throughout the whole of this cruise results were comparatively poor. However, 545 haddock were tagged NW of Shetland and 281 to the east of Orkney. During this work, the opportunity was taken to collect data for investigating the effect of size of catch on the percentage of haddock that were judged to be in satisfactory condition for tagging. The results are shown in Table 1 for 21 hauls from which valid data were obtained. This shows the percentages of taggable haddock out of the total catches of haddock of taggable size, (ie haddock large enough to be marketable). The results are arranged in order of increasing catch of taggable sized haddock. They show clearly, that with increasing catch, the percentage of taggable fish declines. In practice it was found that about 30-50 haddock were tagged per haul, irrespective of total catch, over a wide range of catch sizes. The live fish codend functioned satisfactorily and it was noted that the small numbers of young clupeoids that were captured showed almost no loss of scales.

R JONES

7 February 1972

TABLE 1

Showing the percentages of taggable haddock

Total Catch of Haddock of Taggable Size	% Taggable
12	50
16	50
31	26
31	32
67	36
72	67
117	41
119	61
130	29
133	30
133	30
137	34
144	20
146	40
161	34
167	27
202	23
306	25
394	13
396	13
441	8